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Queen's University at Kingston

FOR THE MILLION.

A SKETCH OF
CANADIAN LIFE.

WITH AN APPENDIX ON EMIGRATION.

BY AN ENGLISHMAN,

NOW RESIDENT IN THE COUNTRY.

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INTRODUCTION.

Although for years past a great deal has been said and written of Canada for the information of the English-speaking races on the other side of the Atlantic, it cannot be denied that the vast majority of the people of Great Britain and Ireland entertain the most erroneous opinions with respect to the conditions of human existence in this portion of Her Majesty's possessions.

It may be safely asserted that beyond a knowledge of its geographical position, but little, as a rule, is known even among the upper classes of society, who, in common with many of their countrymen occupying less elevated social positions, adopt the popular opinion that Canada is a wild country, of tremendous extent, comprising millions of acres of dense impenetrable forests and boundless prairies, adapted only to the wigwam of the Indian the hut of the trapper, and with a climate so severe as to render it unsuited to almost every state of civilized life. On the other hand, there are not a few upon whose minds ideas of doubtful accuracy have been produced by means of highly-colored and exaggerated statements as to the advantages which Canada offers, without distinction, to all those who come to her shores. That she is neither a "waste howling wilderness" nor a "land flowing with milk and honey," will be gathered from the following pages, the object of which is to assist in removing, at least some, of those unjust prejudices and false impressions which now prevail with respect to one of the most important of all the British dependencies.

A SKETCH OF CANADIAN LIFE.

During the summer of 1872, a party of eight—the writer amongst the number—sailed from Liverpool in one of the Atlantic steamers bound to Quebec, at which port we landed after a somewhat uneventful passage of ten days—*en route* for the far West. We were headed by a gentleman whose philanthropy had induced him to undertake the voyage, with a view to selecting a tract of land in some portion of Minnesota, United States—then being opened up by the building of the Northern Pacific Railway—for a colony of Englishmen, which he proposed to bring out in the spring of the following year, to whom the exclusive right of the land in question should be given. In this matter we were to give our chief the benefit of our judgments as well as of our active assistance and co-operation, so far as we could render the same without detriment to our individual interests. On arriving at Quebec we were met, according to appointment made previous to our leaving England, by a fully accredited representative of the financial agents of the N. P. R. Co., on whose lands this proposed colony was to settle. The duty of this

gentleman (who was from Chicago) was to guide, assist, advise, and direct us in all our wanderings through this prairie land of promise, and I will here do him the justice to state, that he discharged all his obligations in a most able manner, and with that innate politeness and liberality so characteristic of the American people. After spending some few hours in Quebec, we, to use a nautical expression common both in the United States and Canada, got "aboard" a train going West, having previously purchased our tickets to a place called Sarnia, distant about six hundred miles, where we arrived in little more than forty-eight hours. It had been arranged that, at this point we should for the time being, bid adieu to the possessions of Her Britannic Majesty and place ourselves under the protection of Uncle Sam. We accordingly crossed the river and landed for the first time on American soil. A circumstance now occurred, which made us conscious of the fact that we were in a foreign country. We were requested by one of the United States Custom House officials to open all the trunks, cases, boxes, &c., containing our luggage, in order that their contents might be examined. This request having been complied with, an officer proceeded to inspect the same, informing us as he laid aside several articles of clothing, which had not been worn, that all new goods were liable to duty, and when we protested that they were for our personal use, were told that no exemptions were made, except in the case of revolvers, bowie knives, and certain other deadly weapons, (of which we had an abundant supply,)

and that they were not subject to duty, being necessary for personal safety. This was our first experience of American laws and regulations, and the inference which it could not fail to suggest, as to the constitution of society in the great Republic, was not of a very pleasant character. We had scarcely completed our speculations in connection with this matter, when it was announced to us that the steamboat in which we were to embark for Duluth would leave in about half an hour and that we must have our baggage put aboard at once.

An hour later and we found ourselves steaming up Lake Huron. The weather during the trip was beautifully fine, and the scenery which constantly presented itself, of surpassing loveliness, and as we had the opportunity of going ashore several times in the course of our passage up the lakes, the time passed pleasantly enough, and on the morning of the fifth day we sighted the youthful city of Duluth, which stands at the head of Lake Superior. We landed about noon and took leave of those of our fellow passengers, whose acquaintance we had casually made on the voyage, and whom during the pilgrimage of this life we should probably never encounter again.

We remained in Duluth (which is a rapidly growing place of some 5,000 inhabitants) only a sufficient length of time to enable us to make some further arrangements with the agents and officials of the railway company, and then proceeded on our journey. Within ten days from this time we beheld the rolling prairies of Minnesota. Villages were already springing up

along the entire line of railway, and at one of these we established our head-quarters. Parties were at once despatched with directions to explore the surrounding country, and report upon the same, and in the course of a week or ten days a tract of land had been decided upon and a site selected for the town near the railway, at which point the company agreed to build a station. The object of our chief having thus far been accomplished, he returned to England to complete his arrangements for bringing out the colonists in the ensuing spring ; and our little band of adventurers, which had hitherto remained intact, began to consider individually what course would be best calculated to further their separate interests. Four of the party at once made up their minds to visit some of the principal cities of the United States and then return home, and of the remaining three, two resolved to stay where they were until the colony should arrive, while the writer decided to make his home for a season in Canada. In less than a fortnight from the time I parted with my companions on the prairies of Minnesota I was in Toronto, without any definite object in view. Everything was strange to me, and I had nothing else to do for the time being but to make observations and institute comparisons between what I saw in Canada and its nearest conceivable counterpart in England—always to the disadvantage of the former. I have, however, since become convinced that these conclusions were for the most part errors of judgment, which not a few of my countrymen, under similar circumstances, have committed, and who, unfortunately, in far too many cases, have not remained long enough to have their

prejudices removed, which, even under the most favorable circumstances, is not a very rapid process.

The first thing that deserves mention is the railway system of the country, which presents a marked contrast in almost every particular when compared with that adopted at home. Here, in Canada as in the United States, they have only first and second class, with sleeping cars attached to all night trains. Virtually, there may be said to be only one class, as by far the greater majority of the travelling community patronize the first-class. The carriages (or cars, as they are called) are handsome, comfortable and convenient. They are of great length, and are so constructed as to admit of a row of seats—specially designed for the purpose, and which are, as a rule, richly upholstered—being placed on either side while an aisle runs through the centre to a door at each end, affording ingress and egress to the passengers, who are permitted to pass from one car to another at their pleasure during the progress of the journey, thus rendering impossible the occurrence of those outrages which occasionally take place on our own lines. They are also well appointed in all other respects, each car being provided with the most complete accommodation for a long journey. The sleeping-cars are simply superb, and are extremely costly. They are so arranged as to be convertible into elegant drawing-room cars during the day and private sleeping compartments at night, and provided with every requisite to enable a lady to make her toilet. To every such car is attached a servant—generally a representative of the colored race—whose special duty it is to attend to the wants and wishes of the passen-

gers, and upon whose punctuality to wake you at any particular hour of the night you may thoroughly rely, and none the less so on account of your not having disappointed his expectation of a "gratuity" which he, in common with many servants of a different complexion, in other countries, so often regard as the distinguishing feature between a gentleman and a cad. The entire train is under the control of a conductor, whose duties, in many respects, are similar to those of our own "guard." In addition, however, to these, he is entrusted with the proud responsibility of collecting fares from those passengers who have taken their seats without having previously purchased their tickets. In such cases the conductor is supposed to make a small additional charge beyond the ordinary fare (with a view of inducing passengers to buy their tickets at the booking office), and give a printed receipt, supplied to him for the purpose; but both these instructions, there are reasons to fear, are occasionally neglected, as well as the further one, to pay over the money to the company. The average rate of speed on Canadian railways is somewhat slower than that permitted on our English lines, and there are fewer accidents in proportion to the travelling done than at home, owing, probably, to a combination of causes. Accommodation, in the shape of refreshment-rooms, is scattered along the various lines of railway, but no wines or liquors can be obtained at these places, the companies having unanimously agreed to prohibit the sale of all intoxicating beverages, with the exception of beer and porter, along their respective lines. The stations are of wood or stone; and while some of them unmistakably suggest

the early days of railroads in Canada, there are others that will bear comparison with many of our English stations, and one or two of recent construction, that would do credit to any city in Europe.

One important feature of railway travelling in this country, is the system of checking luggage, which has the effect of relieving passengers of that trouble and anxiety inseparable from a journey by rail in England. To every piece of baggage is affixed a check, (which usually consists of a thin piece of brass plate, about an inch and a half square), on which is impressed a number, and a duplicate of the same, given to the passenger to whom the luggage belongs. Having this in his possession, he need feel no further concern for the safety of his property—the Company having acknowledged its receipt, by giving this metal ticket, and accepted the responsibility of producing it at a given place. On reaching his destination, the passenger has merely to present his check, and the luggage which it represents will be delivered to him ; but no person, other than the holder of the duplicate, can obtain it. The adoption of this method has, amongst other advantages, that of preventing, to a great extent, the occurrence of those scenes of confusion and disorder, which invariably take place on the arrival of a passenger train at any of our principal stations, and renders unnecessary the request, “Claim your baggage!” with which so many of us have grown familiar.

But, novel as are some of the details of railway management, in no particular, perhaps, is a greater contrast presented by the government of English and

Canadian institutions, than (to use an Americanism) in the "running" of hotels.

On this continent, they are conducted upon a system of business as complete as that adopted by a mercantile firm. The entire business of the house, so far as the public is concerned, is transacted in the "office" with which all respectable hotels are provided. This part of the establishment is generally very conspicuous, being usually located in the centre of the building, immediately next the street, and forming the principal entrance to the hotel. On the counter of the office, a public register is kept, in which all persons as they arrive, are requested to enter their names and addresses; the clerk, who is always in attendance, then assigns them any room or rooms that they may require—the number of which, together with the time of their arrival and departure, are also recorded in the register. This system, besides preventing mistakes which might otherwise easily occur, is found to be a great public convenience. All "guests" of the house (a term—somewhat misapplied—by which those who patronize hotels are designated for the time being), are expected to take their meals in the public dining-room, where they are served at stated hours, three times a day. This apartment is supplied with a number of small tables, each one of which will accommodate about six or eight persons; a method having the advantage of convenience, and one which has hitherto been found sufficiently exclusive to suit the tastes of the general public. Unlike the prevailing custom at European hotels, of allowing each person to order anything he may feel disposed, and charging for what is supplied, in this

country a bill of fare is provided for every meal, and a daily tariff substituted, varying according to the class to which the house belongs. Another peculiar feature in connexion with these institutions is, that the servants attached to them do not expect to be fee'd; and to this circumstance may be attributed, in a great measure, the disfavor with which the majority both of Americans and Canadians regard the opposite practice common in England.

Nor are these instances to which reference has been made, the only ones in which the time honored manners and customs of the people of Great Britain have been departed from by their progeny in this country. On the contrary, they are so numerous, and so frequently exhibit themselves in the ordinary routine of every day life, that they would almost appear to be the results of a settled policy of systematic deviation from those habits and practices which obtain at home, but such, in reality, is not the case, many of these changes having been rendered necessary by the somewhat altered conditions of society on this side the Atlantic, with respect to the nature of which, so much misapprehension exists. There is, perhaps, no error more common, in relation to Canada, than the supposition that no social differences or distinctions are recognized among her population. It is unquestionably true that in almost every phase of Canadian life, democratic tendencies exhibit themselves, and that the fundamental principle on which its code of social laws is based is the "equality of the people," without which, Canada could have made no progress, but it must not be supposed that this

principle is incompatible with the existence of those conditions and relationships necessary to the constitution of what, in England, we call good society. The term "equality of the people," is used here in a somewhat restricted and, perhaps, novel sense, and signifies merely an absence of those impassable barriers which the aristocratic element in Great Britain has, unhappily, been the means of erecting between the various classes of her population. This state of things is impossible in Canada, where mental capabilities and moral worth are the standards of superiority, rather than the accidents of birth or fortune, the practical effect of which is to develop in all grades of the community, those qualities and virtues that, in reality, constitute the greatness of any country, and to give to merit that position to which it is justly entitled. A conspicuous example of this is to be seen in the present leader of the Canadian Government, the Honourable Alexander Mackenzie, a statesman of no ordinary ability, who has risen from comparative obscurity to the proud position he now occupies. The buildings in Canada are of three kinds, brick,—a good deal of stone is also used,—rough-cast, and frame; in order that the two latter terms may be rendered intelligible to the English reader, it may be necessary to explain their meaning; a rough-cast building, then, consists of a wooden shell, lathed and plastered inside and out, the outer coating being of a coarse and durable nature; while the word "frame" is applied only to those buildings which are entirely of wood. Neither of these two kinds are, however, permitted

to be erected within the limits of any city, in consequence of their greater liability to take fire, but are confined principally to dwellings and outhouses in suburban localities and country places, and are adopted mainly on account of their comparative cheapness; they are more durable than might, perhaps, be expected, and when properly finished are said to be well calculated to resist the cold, while there is no perceptible difference in the summer temperature of these, and brick or stone buildings.

In the construction of frame houses, almost every style of architecture is adopted, and when tastefully painted they often present a very light and handsome appearance. The Canadians as a whole are a very hard working, thrifty, intelligent, and contented people, exhibiting as a chief characteristic intense loyalty to the British Crown, coupled with an universal sentiment of affection for the person of her Majesty, which shows itself upon every suitable occasion. And here a short reference to a matter of great interest to a large proportion of the people of this country, may not perhaps be deemed altogether out of place, involving as it does no less a question than the continuance of the connection, which at present exists between England and her possessions in North America. This subject has from time to time engaged the public attention on this side the Atlantic, and the interest which permanently attaches to it was considerably heightened, owing to the policy pursued by the Gladstone Government towards the British colonies generally, which had the effect of remind-

ing the people that the severance of the relationship now subsisting between Great Britain and Canada was something more than a mere possibility in the not far distant future, and it will not be denied that this element of uncertainty gave rise to feelings of some uneasiness especially among those—and they are very numerous—who, while strongly opposed to any idea of annexation to the United States, regard the maintenance of the link which identifies England with her Canadian dependency as absolutely necessary, for the time being, to the existence of the latter as a separate State. The apprehension on this point has, however, almost entirely subsided, owing to subsequent events, and there now appears to be a growing conviction that England will for years yet to come sustain toward Canada that political relationship which it has hitherto been the pride of her people to acknowledge. Nor is it alone to the interests of Canada that such should be the case. The development of those immense natural resources possessed by the vast regions comprising British North America, of which, in point of importance, Canada is the central figure, must have the effect of greatly increasing the population of these dependencies, and of leading in all probability to their ultimate consolidation into one powerful State; the obvious result of which will be to supply to England a largely augmented source of strength, thereby assisting her to maintain that foremost position, which it has been her privilege to hold throughout many past ages of the world's history. If, then,

this view of the future, as it pertains to Canada, and the rest of the British possessions in North America, be correct, it becomes a matter of some importance to Great Britain, that the bond of union, which now connects them, shall be maintained and strengthened rather than be permitted to become gradually weakened and ultimately destroyed, a result which the general colonial policy of the late Government certainly tended to produce.

From this digression I return to continue the record of those particulars, which properly come within the compass of this pamphlet.

The two principal cities of Canada are Montreal and Toronto, the latter although not the largest, is in many respects the leading city of the Dominion, and certainly, to an Englishman, more suggestive of home than any other place on the American continent, and as a brief description of a city, and of city life in this country, is essential to the completion of this sketch, a short reference will be made to it.

Toronto, the Queen City of the West, as it is often termed, has a population of about 70,000, (the greater number of whom are of British origin,) and, like the majority of Canadian towns, is laid out with systematic precision at right angles, streets occurring at regular distances, the space intervening between every two of which being designated a "block," the adoption of this method, besides having the effect of greatly improving the general appearance of the city, is a matter of no little convenience to a stranger, inasmuch as it enables him to find

his way to any part of the town much more easily than would otherwise be the case. Its leading thoroughfares are lined with shops and offices, some of which present a very imposing appearance. Particular streets at certain hours of the day are made the chief resorts of the fashionable portion of the community, whose handsome equipages and liveried servants afford unmistakable evidences that wealth and luxury are not altogether unknown conditions of Canadian existence; further attestation of which is supplied by the large number of substantial, and in some cases almost palatial, residences that ornament the suburban localities. There is, however, another side to the picture, which a glance at the general population of this rapidly growing city reveals. All other grades of society are here represented, except, perhaps, the absolutely destitute; the laborer, the artizan, the skilled mechanic, and the small shop-keeper, each of whom doubtless can, by applying himself assiduously to his calling, not only secure a livelihood, but also reserve something for the uncertain future. It must not, however, be imagined that this can be accomplished without at least ordinary diligence. The intellectual condition of the inhabitants of Toronto (who may doubtless be regarded as representative of the population of the country generally in this respect) is evidenced by the numerous institutions of which the city can boast for the education of the people in every department of learning, while their religious tendencies are not less plainly indicated by the large number of edifices for public worship that are to be

found in every direction. It is also worthy of note that in Canada, there is no "Church" established or endowed by the State, the absence of which has the effect of imparting greater freedom and vitality to the various religious communities, clearly demonstrating the desirability of placing all sects of Christians on one common level. With regard to their architectural tastes, it may be remarked that the appearance of many of their recently erected public and private buildings is such as to justify the assertion that they do not fall below the European standard. Manufacturing industries are rapidly increasing, and building land is sold by the foot. It already realizes enormous prices, and is every year advancing, comparatively, little near the business part of the city, is now available, and that is being rapidly covered with blocks of warehouses, some of them of large proportions, rendered necessary by the constantly increasing demand for extended business accommodation. On every hand the enterprising spirit of the people manifests itself, while indications of accumulating wealth become apparent in whatever direction you may turn, thus affording evidence not only of the flourishing condition of the city as such, but also of the prosperity of the country generally. A decidedly novel feature is presented in its sidewalks, which are principally of wood, and laid in a similar manner to the flooring of a house. In this respect Toronto represents not the cities alone, but all the towns and villages throughout the country. The boards used for this purpose are probably about two inches thick. They

last longer than might perhaps be supposed, and when worn out are quickly and easily replaced, with very little interruption to traffic; they are wider than our own pavement, and when kept in a proper state of repair cannot be said to render the pedestrian exercises of the people in any way disagreeable. The principal thoroughfares are also supplied with the most modern facilities for the cheap and expeditious conveyance of the public to different parts of the city, whilst the luxury of a cab drive can be indulged in at about the same cost and with a similar degree of comfort as at home. Further points of resemblance to European cities are to be found in its theatres and other places of amusement; its museums, galleries of art, public parks and gardens, and its various associations and organizations for the benefit of the people. Nor does the resemblance cease here. The dwellings of its working population are not unlike those which afford a home to their toiling brethren in the large centres of trade in England, whilst the general contrast presented by the East and West ends of the city is proportionately as great as that observable in the same divisions of our own metropolis. For miles around Toronto, all the woods have long since disappeared, and the lands on which they grew, devoted to market gardens, and other agricultural purposes. This may also be said of the neighborhoods of most of the towns and villages throughout the country, and it is now found necessary in order to supply the ever increasing demand for timber, both for exportation and

home consumption, to penetrate into the more remote regions where the woodsman's axe is constantly employed in reducing the limits of those mighty forests hitherto untouched by the hand of man, and it is estimated that if the work of demolition proceeds at its present rate in the course of a few years Canada will be absolutely cleared of all its most valuable wood. The consumption of it in this country alone is enormous. It is not only used here for all the purposes to which it is applied at home, but also for fuel for domestic and general requirements—even for locomotive engines. Many houses are built of it entirely, besides these it is employed in various other ways. Hitherto coal has been an almost unknown commodity, except in cities. It is now, however, becoming generally introduced, and will no doubt soon supersede the use of wood entirely; on some of the lines of railway it has already done so. The towns are for the most part small, with populations ranging from four to seven thousands, in which are to be found almost every grade of social life, from the gentleman of independent means down to the scavenger, together with all those necessary adjuncts of modern civilization. Even the villages—many of them—have their separate corporate bodies, public markets, local papers, and literary institutions. They, however, still exhibit many indications of what they were in the earlier days of Canadian life.

It may be here observed that of the powerful tribes of Indians who roamed over Canada in years gone by, comparatively few are to be found at the present day,

and those that are left have been reduced to a state akin to civilization, and now occupy certain reservations of land set apart for them by the Government. They are, however, rapidly disappearing, and will no doubt in the course of a short time become altogether extinct.

Passing on to the agricultural districts—which now extend over an immense area—we are brought into contact with the most original phase of existence to be met with in this portion of the British Empire, and which is presented in the “tillers of the soil.” Canada is essentially a land of agricultural pursuits, and her farming population represents not only a considerable proportion of the wealth, but also a good deal of the bone and sinew of the country ; at the same time, they are doubtless entitled to be considered one of the most important classes of the community accustomed, generally speaking, to manual labor, and indulging in but few of the luxuries of life, they may be said to exhibit a marked contrast to the English farmer. This, however, will cause no surprise when it is remembered that the majority of these men are of the humblest origin, and that they are either immigrants themselves or the immediate descendants of the earlier agricultural settlers, most of whom came to Canada from the various countries of Europe, almost, or altogether, in a state of poverty.

In order to enable my reader to form some idea of the all but insurmountable difficulties with which they have had to contend in bringing this country into a state of cultivation, it will be necessary to take him back to the commencement of the present century, at

which time Canada might have been correctly described as a land of dense forests. At this period of her history, when the trail of the red man had scarce disappeared, and the war-whoop of the Indian still echoed in the distance, the hardy sons of toil, here and there penetrated the backwoods, and after rearing their log huts in which to shelter themselves, commenced to clear away the bush ; and although they were, doubtless, often dispirited by the prospect of their almost hopeless task, worn out with constant fatigue, and compelled to endure the greatest hardships, our heroes, sustained by a ray of hope which illumined the future, day after day, with unceasing regularity, pursued their labors, settlers soon began to increase in all directions, the ring of the axe was everywhere heard, until to-day tens of thousands of acres of cultivated land silently proclaim the fact that Canada has emerged from her original position to take her place among the civilized nations of the globe ; and although bush life has by no means become a thing of the past, its essential conditions are changed so entirely as to render a more detailed account of this primitive mode of existence unnecessary in any description, the object of which is to represent life as it is to be found to-day rather than as it existed in times that may now be regarded as practically past. Let us, then, follow the modern farmer to his home. We find the log hut has, almost without exception, been superseded by a comfortable and commodious dwelling, and although, as a rule, but few indications of elegance and refinement are visible, there are, nevertheless abundant evidences that the hard times of former years have passed away. The representative

farm-house is divided into a number of compartments, adapted to the wants and requirements of a working family, and arranged with a view of securing their proper accommodation. No domestic servants are kept (there are of course exceptions to this rule), and, as a consequence, every member of the household who is of a proper age is expected to perform a share of the labor of the farm or house. A spirit of rigid economy governs all their tastes and habits, and may, in fact, be said to constitute the ruling principle of their lives. The greater number of Canadian farms are owned by those who occupy them, they having been secured in the first instance, while covered with bush, as free grants from the Government. They contain from one to two hundred acres, and are divided into fields by means of what are called snake fences. These are constructed of rough timber, without the use of nails, and in such a manner as to form a continuation of angles, which present an appearance the reverse of ornamental. It may be here explained that the process of what is called clearing a bush farm consists in cutting down the trees at about three feet from the ground and removing them, leaving the stumps to rot away. There are thousands of acres still covered with them. They do not, however, prevent the land being cropped. Later, a great many of these stumps have been removed by machinery, and in the course of a few years they will probably all have disappeared.

Although in the aggregate a large amount of agricultural labour is absorbed, (the demand for which yearly increases, owing to the great extent of new territory annually brought under cultivation,) the individual

farmer employs comparatively little, supplying the deficiency as best he can by his own industry and that of his family. A kind of freemasonry exists among the agriculturalists of Canada, and in busy seasons those living in the same neighbourhood often assist each other. By far the greater proportion of the land under cultivation is extremely fertile, and although the system of farming usually adopted in this country must have the effect of impoverishing the soil, large crops are, nevertheless, obtained. A number of the most recently invented agricultural implements are in common use, but a steam threshing machine is still the greatest novelty; their general introduction, however, is only a matter of a short time. During the winter months the farmers market almost the whole of their produce, they pour into the towns and villages from all directions, not only to sell, but also to buy what they require, and scenes of the greatest activity are often presented. Such are some of the leading features of Canadian farm life; land is every year becoming more valuable, and it will, no doubt, in the course of a few years reach a high price. Many of those engaged in its cultivation have recently turned their more particular attention to stock breeding, and large numbers of pure bred animals have been imported into the country, which cannot fail to have a beneficial effect. The next generation of Canadian farmers will, doubtless, be superior to the present, in many respects, and all indications that bear upon the matter denote the rapid approach of the time when the business of agriculture in Canada will be conducted upon the best ascertained principles of farming.

The Canadian climate is undoubtedly one of the most invigorating, and at the same time, as enjoyable as any in the world. Although cold in winter, the weather is bright and cheerful, while the atmosphere may be described as clear and bracing. Snow generally falls to a considerable depth, and remains from ten to twelve, and sometimes fourteen weeks. During this period all vehicles on wheels disappear, and in their places sleighs (or sledges as they are sometimes called) and cutters*, are substituted, the use of which renders travelling by road a much more pleasant and agreeable exercise than it is at any other time.

The nights during the winter months are usually very bright and are taken advantage of by the people in rural districts, as well to shew their friendship to their more distant neighbours, as for purposes of pleasure. Furs and buffalo robes are called into requisition, and long excursions are often made into the country by sleighing parties ; these are sometimes organized on a large scale, and as they glide swiftly over the smooth and hard frozen surface of the snow, the bells (always used in this mode of travelling) keep up a merry and harmonious tinkling, which, breaking upon the ear from the distance, gives warning of their otherwise noiseless approach. The average summer temperature is not greatly in excess of that of England, although it is much more regular, one of the results being that all crops mature more rapidly than at home, the harvest, however, occurs at about the same period of the year as it does in Great Britain.

* Cutters are merely a fancy kind of sleigh.

The natural scenery of some parts of Canada can scarcely be surpassed. Its far famed Falls of Niagara which have been so often described, is to the tourist a special feature of interest, as well as a source of wonder and admiration, precipitating their mighty waters from an elevation of one hundred and sixty-five feet into a yawning chasm beneath, they present a spectacle of wild grandeur which has, perhaps, no equal in any portion of the world. The roads, generally, are somewhat inferior to our own, but this is probably owing to the fact that the materials necessary to their proper construction are not so readily procurable. The principal roads throughout the country are, however, all gravelled; the expenses in connexion with them being obtained by levying tolls after the English manner.

The school system of the country is a very excellent one. It is regulated by a law that renders it compulsory on the part of parents to send their children (unless their education is otherwise provided for) during a certain portion of the year, and up to a specified age, to the free public schools provided for the purpose, thereby securing to the latter at least such an education as will enable them to read and write their own language; and those who are desirous, have the opportunity of securing even a classical education free of cost. With regard to its laws, it may be asserted that they are just and equitable, and, as a rule, honestly and impartially administered, framed with a view of securing the greatest possible freedom to the subject, and of affording at the same time, the most ample protection to the various classes of the

population ; they are regarded by the people as the bulwarks of their country's liberty. The Canadians also enjoy the luxury of a well-informed daily press, representing different shades of opinion and devoted to the interests of the country generally, whilst its usually able treatment of the various questions of the day affords indications of high journalistic ability. Politically the people are divided, as at home, into two great classes, and are known as Reformers and Conservatives. The latter for years past have managed to retain the reins of power, although during this time their hold upon the public mind has been gradually relaxing. It is, however, probable that they would still have continued for some time to come, to occupy the treasury benches, had not the fact of their having bartered away for a certain pecuniary consideration the charter for the construction of a Government railroad, been discovered and exposed by the opposite party.

A court was constituted* for the purpose of receiving evidence in relation to the charges brought against the leader of the late administration, in connexion with this matter, and those charges being sustained, the public opinion of the country demanded the resignation of the government, which immediately took place. The Reformers then succeeded to power, and during the brief period that has since elapsed, they have passed several important measures, amongst them a "Ballot Bill," the object of which is to prevent as far as possi-

* These details are here inserted, merely to show that there is no disposition, either on the part of the Parliament or the people, to wink at political immorality.

ble, corrupt practices at parliamentary elections. They have also announced their intention to push forward, as rapidly as practicable, that gigantic undertaking, the building of the Pacific Railroad, which is to stretch across the American continent, through British territory, and will, when completed, connect the Atlantic with the Pacific ocean ; this will not only have the effect of assisting in a large degree its internal development, but by opening up a great highway between the markets of the East and West, into which a large proportion of the carrying trade must for obvious reasons, become diverted, will increase the commercial importance of Canada to an extent scarcely to be over-estimated.

Parliamentary customs and usages are based upon English precedents, and the deliberations of the several legislative bodies* of the country are conducted with nearly as much form and ceremony, and with, perhaps, an equal amount of dignity, as at Westminster ; whilst the polished oratory and brilliant talents of a few of the leading politicians, would make them conspicuous even in the British House of Commons.



* Each Province has its local government, subject, however, to a certain well-defined extent, to the Dominion Parliament.

APPENDIX.

EMIGRATION.

Of the various fields for emigration which are open to the people, in different parts of the world, Canada has, perhaps, no equal. In this portion of the British Empire, all grades of society have, at least, a fair chance of success, whilst a large proportion of the working-classes are afforded every opportunity of securing a competency. To the agricultural settler, the Canadian Government, in addition to an assisted passage and certain other important advantages, offers a "free grant of land," of from one hundred to two hundred acres, upon conditions that are easily complied with: and in connexion with this subject, it may be mentioned, that the fertile province of Manitoba, which consists principally of prairie land, and forms part of the great North-west of Canada, is now open to the emigrant. This large tract of country, owing to the richness of its soil and its other natural advantages, constitutes a most desirable farming locality, and is on that account, attracting a great deal of attention at the present time, even among those who are living in other parts of the country; it being anticipated that they who settle there now, will in the course of a few years become rich, in consequence of the advance in the value of land alone, which must necessarily take place. To the practical English farmer, of limited means, it is admirably adapted, as well as to the sons of farmers, who have only a small capital with which to commence the world. Manitoba will shortly be provided with direct railway communication with the principal markets of the Dominion; and in the meantime, passengers are cheaply conveyed thither, over what is known as the "Dawson Route." This journey is performed partly by road and partly by boat, and occupies about ten days after leaving the Railway.

Of all who come to Canada, none are more certain of success than the agricultural laborer, either as a laborer, (always provided the labor-market is not overstocked,) or as an occupier of his own freehold—particularly in the latter capacity ; but in order to commence farming on his own account, it is necessary that the emigrant should be able to command some capital, and inability in this respect probably constitutes the chief difficulty in relation to this matter. It has, however, been recognized, and efforts are now being made to obviate it. Immense districts of bush land still await the settler, who, if he could manage to support himself and his family for a few months, until he could clear and crop a little patch of land, the produce of which would meet his requirements, until the following harvest, might be said to have secured a fair start, and would soon become the owner of a valuable farm. But how is this to be accomplished ? While awaiting an authoritative solution of this problem, the suggestion that a good deal might be done in this direction by the laborers themselves, may, perhaps, be worthy of consideration. The development of that system of organization, by which means alone, they succeeded in obtaining better terms from their employers at home, would enable them to send abroad annually, a certain number of their body, who, would in the course of a short time, be in a position to repay any amount which might be advanced to them from any fund created for the purpose. The Canadian Government, would, doubtless, be prepared to assist liberally any such movement, and as a result the agricultural labor market of Great Britain, would soon be relieved to such an extent as to place those who still remained to cultivate the soil of their native land, on a more even footing with the representatives of Capital, than that which they occupy to-day.

Another class of men to whom Canada offers great inducements, is mechanics. Employment in all

branches of trade is generally abundant, and good wages can as a rule, be obtained. An ordinary mechanic is paid from one and a half to three dollars* per day, while skilled hands in certain businesses command even higher rates of remuneration. Clerks, and shop assistants are in less active demand, but a certain number can always get employment, at salaries, ranging from eight to twelve dollars per week.

A limited number of gardeners, grooms, coachmen, and butlers are also required, but such positions—particularly the two latter—are not so easily obtained as in older countries; but female domestic servants readily secure situations, and able bodied men accustomed to manual labor, can usually earn high wages. The cost of living in Canada, is upon the whole, about the same as in England. Bread and flour are cheaper than at home, meat about half the price, clothing, from fifteen to twenty per cent. dearer, while rents and fuel show but little difference. Board and lodging can be obtained in cities at from two-and-a-half to five dollars per week, and in country places at proportionately cheaper rates. Spring and summer are the best seasons in which to come to Canada, many avenues of trade being then open, which in winter are to a certain extent contracted, the former periods are also the most desirable for many other reasons.

Upon the general question of Emigration nothing need here be said. It is admitted on all sides that it alone affords a panacea for those ills to which the struggling masses of all old countries are more or less exposed in consequence of the existence of a state of things which has the effect of disturbing the proper and legitimate relationship between Capital and Labor, and let it be remembered by all those who are anxious to correct such an unhealthy condition of affairs and at the same time promote their individual interests that they can find a home in Canada.

* A dollar is equal to about four shillings and two pence of English money.

